

A Parent's Hope

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Feedback welcome and wanted.

Note: Since coming to the conclusion that the word "Bail" is a title, I had no choice but to make up a first name for Leia's father, Bail Organa, and I chose the name 'Bren.' This is simply speculative fiction. I'm pretty sure that Episodes II & III will contradict everything that I write, but this is my vision.

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"Cover her face; mine eyes dazzle; she died young."--John Whitfield

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Leia Organa Solo sat quietly as she watched her three young children play on the living room floor. Across the room, Han read quietly in his favorite comfy chair, glancing up momentarily when his children got particularly loud.

It was moments like these that Leia treasured--moments when they could pretend like they were an ordinary family whose biggest worry was what to cook for dinner. These moments had always been rare. As the Chief of State of the budding New Republic, Leia spent more time away from her family than she cared to admit. Every time a problem was solved, a new one arose. And it seemed like she, Han, and Luke were the only ones who could handle it.

She sighed. It was the downside of being heroes, if you will.

After a while, Han rose from his chair, moving across the room to sit next to his wife on the couch. Putting his arm around her, he joined her in watching their children.

Jacen must have said something particularly funny, because Jaina giggled hysterically for longer than necessary. Anakin laughed too, but only because his big sister was laughing.

"They're beautiful, aren't they?" Han commented softly. Leia smiled as she glanced at her husband, noting the look of amazement on his face. It was the look he got every time he looked at his kids too long. Leia's theory was that fifteen years ago, he would have laughed if someone told him that one day he would marry and produce three wonderful children. For a long time, he had been little more than a pirate. Maybe he felt he didn't deserve such happiness.

She rubbed his arm affectionately. "They're amazing," she agreed.

She remembered the day the twins, Jaina and Jacen, were born, four years ago. She and Han had been amazed at the tiny bundles of joy they had created together. About a year and a half later, Anakin had been born.

When Leia had found out about her first pregnancy, she had been shocked and uncertain. It had not been planned. Now, as she and her husband watched the three lives they created together, they could not imagine their lives without them.

"I remember when I was four," Leia told Han suddenly.

Han looked at his wife, noting the sadness that crept into her voice, and the tiny lines that formed on her otherwise smooth brow.

"I remember the day my mother died quite clearly, shortly after my fourth birthday. Before that, I can only remember fragmented images of her. The things I remember mostly were her beauty and her voice. I remember she used to sing to me . . . and that she seemed sad, but I didn't know why."

She paused, her eyes focusing on her daughter. She knew that Jaina was almost a mirror image of herself. Sometimes when she looked at Jaina, especially at the age of four, she could see herself in her daughter's eyes. Jaina even had a white satin and lace dress that reminded her vividly of the one she was wearing on the day her mother died.

Han rubbed her back gently. "Do you want to tell me about it?" he asked, urging her on.

After only a moment's thought, Leia began.

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The sun was shining brightly on the day he found his wife's body in a field of flowers behind the palace. It was still early, and moisture remained on her frozen lips and stiff limbs. Her long, fine hair blew

softly over her still face in the gentle breeze of spring. Everywhere, surrounding her body, was an ocean of flowers--pink and blue and purple and yellow. There were even some clasped in her hands.

Her dress--a dress of royalty billowed around her. It was a beautiful dress of purple silk, lace, and pearls. Her husband had given it to her as a gift. He would have given her anything.

But he couldn't give her the happiness that she had so deserved, because he knew that her heart had belonged to another man.

Slowly, Bren Organa lay down on the soft flowers, still covered in the early morning dew. Stretching out next to his wife's body, he hugged her to his chest, sobbing into her dark hair. "Padme . . . oh, gods, Padme," he gasped in between breaths.

Slowly, he released her back to the soil, showering her face and eyelids in soft kisses. The crimson had disappeared from her cheeks and lips already, leaving in its place the coolness of marble. He lay with her for several minutes, wondering what he was going to tell his four-year-old daughter.

Leia had been the one that woke him up that morning. He had bolted out of bed at the frantic sounds of his daughter's screaming and crying. He had immediately noticed that Padme was not in bed, but he had no time to worry about it.

He found his daughter in her bedroom, trembling against the headboard with tears streaking down her tiny face. Her brown eyes were wider than usual, and reddened with tears. He had held his trembling little girl in his arms, begging her to tell him what was wrong. Through her sobbing, she had told him she dreamed that her mommy was dead.

He had reassured her, of course, telling her that it was just a dream. Mommy was perfectly safe. She was . . . but he had stopped when he remembered that Padme hadn't been next to him when he woke up.

Immediately, he had fetched a servant to take care of Leia while he left to search for his wife. It shouldn't be too difficult. Palace Security kept up with the whereabouts of the people within its walls, particularly the family of the Bail, the leader of Alderaan.

It did not take long for him to be informed that she had gone to pick wildflowers in the fields, demanding that Security was not allowed to follow her. Despite his own reassurances, he had felt the dread forming in the pit of his stomach as he walked through the fields in search of her. Leia's words rung heavily through his mind as he did so. "I . . . I dreamed Mommy was . . . was dead."

So now, as he carried his wife's body toward the palace walls, he had no idea how he would tell Leia that she had been right. Her mommy was dead.

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It was to be gorgeous the remainder of the day, as was typical on Alderaan. Bren and Leia sat quietly on one of the many balconies together, saying nothing. It seemed insulting that the sun would

shine on a day the world seemed to be falling apart. Normally, on days such as this, Leia begged to be able to play in the fields, but on this day, the child seemed unaware of the greenness of the leaves in the trees that fluttered in the gentle wind, carrying with it the scent of honeysuckle. She seemed unaware of the sun shining down on the gorgeous flowers of the field.

Actually, he didn't think his daughter would ever want to play in the field again. Not after this.

Leia understood about death. Padme and Bren had made sure of this. They knew that there was a possibility that one or both of them might die because of the budding Rebellion against Palpatine's proclaimed Empire.

Both Padme and Bren were highly active members of the Rebellion. They fought for the peace and prosperity of the Republic.

But understanding death wasn't knowing death, and it sure didn't stop the pain.

Tentatively, Bren touched his daughter's back. She was sitting, arms around her knees, gazing into the distance. She seemed to be in deep thought. Bren was worried about Leia, but he knew she would be fine in time.

"Daddy?" she asked softly. His heart was lifted. It was the first time she'd spoken since she had awoken him early that morning.

"What is it, sweetheart?"

"Can I join the Rebellion when I'm old enough?" She was still looking into the distance.

Bren studied his little girl thoughtfully. He was unsure of why she expressed sudden interest in the Rebellion. Perhaps she wanted to do something that her mother would have been proud of, had she lived.

She turned her big brown eyes to look up at him. Sometimes it startled him how much she looked like Padme.

"When you're old enough, sweetie. But it takes a lot of dedication, and it's extremely dangerous."

She returned his gaze solemnly. "I know," she assured him. And as she met his gaze evenly, he knew that this small, innocent child was serious. He smiled, tears brimming in his eyes. His Leia--so smart and dedicated. She would make a great leader some day. Yes, her mother would be proud. As would he.

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Many years later, Leia was grown with a family of her own, having lead the Rebellion--second only to Mon Mothma, who had founded the Rebel Alliance next to her father. Organa's Rebellion had defeated the Empire, and his daughter, Leia Organa of Alderaan, was the leader of the New Republic.

Han engulfed his wife in a hug as she finished her story. He finally pulled back, touching her beautiful face. "They would be proud of you, sweetheart."

She grinned back playfully. "Well, I don't know if they would've approved of you, Solo."

He frowned, faking offense. "What, they wouldn't approve of an ex-Imperial with no family who once smuggled and did his share of pirating before meeting the most beautiful woman in the galaxy, falling madly in love with her, and having three great kids?"

She laughed at him, punching him in the arm. "Come on, let's put the kids to bed." She leaned over next to his ear. "I have a surprise for you," she whispered seductively, sending a chill up his spine.

And that's all it took to get him to gather up the little ones despite their groans of protest.

End
file.